

**Date and time:** Monday May 19 2014 5:05 - 6:35 pm (second visit)

**Weather:** Pr 61mm; RH 44%; BP 102.6 kPa; clear; SW 5 - 10 km/h

**Activity:** Two visits to Newport Forest and one to Moraviantown

This morning Steward Marg Hulls took members of the West Elgin Nature Club on a walk through Newport Forest, while this afternoon I paid a visit to Moravian-town to check out Steward Darren Jacobs' nature trail along the river. After that, I came back to Newport Forest for a quick visit to pick up images and weather stats.

But first Marg Hulls: She stands on the left below among the Virginia Bluebells in



the Riverside Forest, along with five other nature lovers, a sixth on camera. The group followed the main trail, spending more than three hours on the property and enjoying every minute of it. Among their adventures was the discovery of a partially inflated Mothers Day balloon bobbling on the forest floor. When a member went to retrieve it, out jumped a large, white “wolf spider” with excessively hairy legs. What was it? Another find resembled an egg yolk that turned out to be dripping from a broken vine of River Grape. Was it sap, fungal excretion or what? The group saw many birds, including a Wild Turkey that flew out of the Gallery Forest (“GF” below). Their list of wildflowers (also below) included 19 species.



At Moraviantown, Darren Jacobs drove me out to the river in his jeep, parking beside the nature trail he has been working on for more than a year. From most points on the trail one can see the river below. False Solomon's Seal lined the

broad, crushed stone trail. We discussed ways to label points of interest. Instead of the common name followed by the scientific name, why not have the common name followed by the native name. “Why not have the native name followed by the common name,” smiled Darren.

Glen Jacobs, Darren’s uncle and an expert in the Delaware language, rolled up in his van. I showed him some of my recent work on a spelling book employed by the Moravian missionaries to teach their Delaware charges how to write. Delaware phrases were translated into English. My version of the spelling book simply inverts the order so that one can look up an English word or phrase and see the Delaware translation. Glen liked the idea but had reservations (so to speak) about the German-speaking missionaries from Czechoslovakia. Could *they* speak it?

Darren took us downriver in jeep and van to a place on the bank where a dilapidated tin shed would serve as a blind. We crept inside and peered across the river at the large stick-nest with a pair of Bald Eagles in it. Darren was taking pictures with his Canon 35X. Glen and I were astonished to see a baby Eagle’s head fill the image. Mother and father took turns guarding the nest and going out for eats. The babies would crane their heads and the parent would regurgitate whatever it had found, from fish-guts to roadkill. “Watch them poop,” said Darren. Presently a white jet shot out from the nest to fall some distance from the tree. “Ho-lee!”



It was getting late and I had to get over to Newport Forest. Half an hour later I was opening the gate and driving in. Not much of a visit: I took the weather and changed the cards on the trail cams. Then I just stood for a while, scanning the edge of Blind Creek Forest, looking for signs of damage from the arctic winter just over. Some of the trees were leafing out from lower branches but the tops still looked dead. Other trees had no leaves at all. Perhaps it was too early to pronounce *waldsterben* on the woods. A mourning dove began evensong, not a great omen.

**Birds:** (amalgamated list - 12)

Bald Eagle (TR); Black-capped Chickadee (GF); Blue Jay (GF); Gray Catbird (RSF); Great Crested Flycatcher (RSF); House Sparrow (Rd); Mourning Dove (GF); Northern Cardinal (ET); Pileated Woodpecker (RSF); Rose-breasted Grosbeak (PLM); Tree Swallow (UM); Wild Turkey (GF)

**Wildflowers:** (18)

Common Winter Cress; Creeping Charlie; Dandelion; Golden Alexander; Hawthorn spp.; Jack-in-the-Pulpit; Marsh Marigold; Pale Cream Violet; Prickly Gooseberry; Smooth Yellow Violet; Spring Beauty; Starry Solomon’s Seal;

Trillium (pink phase); Trout Lily (white var.) Virginia Bluebell; Wild Apple; Wild Black Currant; Wild Geranium; Wild Ginger;

### **Readers Write:**

Glen Jacobs, mentioned above, corrects my Delaware in a previous Bulletin: “That was a common grackle or blackbird as we call it "chohkwaliish" . What you had written. I think you meant "choh..ka..lih..lee " for the red winged blackbird mahta or aaha. Will try to be down there on Saturday [Wildflower Walk].”

Dan Bickel, an entomologist at the Australian National Museum: “I noticed from the photos that your spring (at least as I remember it) seems quite far behind. I think by mid-May, leaves should be much more developed and a canopy closing in. Also, I remember hearing from a lepidopterist regarding moth diversity, that no matter how warm or cold the winter was, everything more or less catches up and is "on track" by the second week of July. If it applies to moths I suppose it would also apply to vegetation emergence, flowering, etc. This is “anecdotal evidence” of course, but most of life is nothing but a series of anecdotes - statistics be damned!”

### **IMAGES:**



Blind Creek Forest continues to look rather bare. Are some of the treetops in this image dead? What about the trees themselves? It's May 19 already!





**WILDVIEW**

05-16-2013 06:51:10

A Wild Turkey strolls past Trail Cam #1 at 7 am last friday to display its handsome plumage. Year should read 2014, but who's counting.